

Dear School District Superintendents:

After administering the PARCC field test that was administered last spring, the consortium has studied the data to inform our plans for future test times and assessments. We are pleased to share this information with you.

As a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Arkansas has played an important role in the design and development of the PARCC assessments. Recently, our state and the other PARCC states reviewed information from the spring 2014 field tests and determined test session times based on that information. This now allows schools to begin the scheduling process. For those of you who were involved in field tests this past spring, you will see that the amount of time that schools must schedule for each test session is shorter than during the field test administration.

In addition to the session time information, I am also pleased to share with you estimated release dates for test manuals and technology guidelines, student registration dates, and when to expect the next round of practice tests.

### **Session testing times**

Based on information about the time it took students to complete test sessions during the spring 2014 field test, the PARCC states have set test session times (called unit testing times in the forthcoming test manuals) that should allow the vast majority of students to complete the tests. Most students took less time to complete the field test than projected last year. The spring 2015 session test times are adjusted accordingly and can be seen in the charts below. The charts indicate the amount of time that must be scheduled, and, **for informational purposes only**, the amount of time you should anticipate it will take the majority of students to complete the test (estimated time on task).

The revised times were established so that students would have sufficient time to complete the assessments but also to minimize the amount of time spent on testing. As you know, this is important to ensure that all children have sufficient time to show what they know and can do. In English language arts/literacy, for example, the session times should enable students to do close reading of the passages, draft their written responses, and go back to edit their work.

The PARCC states will re-examine the session test times again following the spring 2015 administration. The PARCC states plan to continuously review the test design to ensure the right balance between generating useful and timely information for teachers and families, and minimizing the time the test sessions take.

## Scheduling Sessions

Use the charts below for scheduling. The majority of students will complete each session in the Estimated Time on Task. However, schools must plan for the full unit time so that all students have the opportunity complete the test. Instructional leaders from PARCC states will be gathering soon to offer guidance and share best practices and models for scheduling the assessments. Watch for more information in October.

### SESSION TIMES

		PBA Unit 1	PBA Unit 2	PBA Unit 3	EOY Unit 1	EOY Unit 2
GRADE 3 ELA	Unit Time	75	75	60	75	-
GRADE 3 MATH	Unit Time	75	75		75	75
GRADES 4-5 ELA	Unit Time	75	90	60	75	-
GRADES 4-5 MATH	Unit Time	80	70		75	75
GRADES 6-8 ELA	Unit Time	75	90	60	60	60
GRADES 6-8 MATH	Unit Time	80	70		80	75
GRADES 9-11 ELA *11 ELA OPTIONAL	Unit Time	75	90	60	60	60
ALGEBRA I GEOMETRY	Unit Time	90	75		80	75
ALGEBRA II* OPTIONAL	Unit Time	90	75		90	75

**Unit Testing Time** is the amount of time any student who needs it must be provided to complete the unit. It is the amount of testing time schools must schedule for each unit.

**Estimated Time on Task** is the approximate amount of time, based on data from the field test, in which the majority of students may complete a unit. It is provided for informational purposes only.

### **Anticipated release dates for key resources**

In addition to today's release of the unit test times, the PARCC consortium will be releasing the following resources in the coming weeks to help schools and districts prepare for this spring's assessments:

- **Test administration manuals.** As a result of feedback from the spring 2014 field test, the PARCC states have worked to substantially improve the test administration manuals. The new manuals will be streamlined, with clearer language. One large test manual for all grades has been replaced with manuals customized for each grade band, meaning teachers will not have to sift through lengthy instructions not intended for them. Manuals will be shipped to schools that have registered students and posted on the PARCC website.

The test administration manuals include information about test security policies and procedures, as well as tasks to complete before, during, and after testing.

**[Fall block schedule test administration manuals.** High schools that use block scheduling will administer PARCC assessments in December and January with paper-based forms only. Fall block schedule test manuals will be available in mid-October.]

**Spring 2015 test administration manuals.** These will be available in early January 2015.

- **Test coordinator manuals.** These provide information about registering students, creating security, logistics and training plans, testing times and schedules and receiving, distributing and returning materials. They will be available on the same timeline as the test administration manuals.
- **Technology guidelines.** PARCC will post an updated version of the Technology Guidelines for PARCC Assessments in late fall 2014. Anticipated updates include clarifications regarding the use of accessibility tools and supported browser versions.
- **Student Registration.** Registration of students for the fall block testing runs Sept. 8 to Oct. 3 for schools to upload registration files for both the PBA and the EOY assessments. The training module for student registration has been improved to include clearer instructions, easier navigation and state-specific information. Registration dates for the spring 2015 administration have not been set.

- **Practice Tests.** PARCC will be adding new practice tests this fall and winter: performance-based practice tests in math and end-of-year assessments in English Language Arts/Literacy. They will be posted on our [Practice Tests web page](http://www.parcconline.org/practice-tests) ([www.parcconline.org/practice-tests](http://www.parcconline.org/practice-tests)).

Arkansas educators and Arkansas Department of Education assessment staff have been deeply engaged in every step of the process of developing the PARCC assessments and now the preparations for administering them in Arkansas in spring 2015. We hope that by keeping you informed early and often, we can assist school districts and schools as they prepare for the first full administration of the PARCC assessments next spring.